

make possible the passage of this significant piece of legislation.

In addition, I thank Senators DODD, ORRIN HATCH, HILLARY CLINTON, and EDWARD KENNEDY for championing the Senate companion bill, S. 1858.

I also thank the coalition of public health groups, especially the March of Dimes, for working with us over the last 4 years on this critical issue.

Madam Speaker, approximately 5,000 babies are born each year with detectable and treatable disorders. Forty years ago, these disorders would have gone undetected until symptoms appeared. This resulted in otherwise preventable deaths or lifelong suffering from disabling consequences such as mental retardation and cerebral palsy.

Today we have the ability to give a newborn baby a simple blood test that can identify many life-threatening genetic illnesses before symptoms occur. Fortunately, this early identification makes it possible to treat babies in time to prevent severe disorders, serious complications and even death.

Yet tragically in the United States, approximately 1,000 infants a year die or are permanently disabled from these treatable disorders. These preventable tragedies are largely due to the fact that our country lacks a national newborn screening standard. Without a national standard, our States have great disparity and variation in the quality and number of newborn screening tests an infant may receive.

Today's passage of Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act is a major step toward correcting these disparities because it encourages States to uniformly test for and keep updated a scientifically recommended panel of disorders. And it makes available the resources States need to expand and improve their newborn screening programs.

The Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act also has the potential to save millions of dollars in health care costs for families and States because it empowers parents and health care professionals with knowledge about the importance of newborn screening and follow-up care.

In addition, the bill requires the Centers for Disease Control to ensure the quality of laboratories involved in newborn screening and it establishes a system for collecting and analyzing data to help researchers develop better detection, prevention, and treatment tragedies.

Madam Speaker, by passing the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act, this Congress seized an opportunity to protect vulnerable babies from undue suffering and death and to give them a chance for a long and healthy life. Once again, I thank my colleagues for voting to pass this critical piece of public health legislation.

RAPE OF A LITTLE GIRL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. Madam Speaker, in the early morning hours of March 2, 1998, 10 years ago, Patrick Kennedy of Jefferson Parish, Louisiana, called 911 to report that his 8-year-old stepdaughter had been dragged from her garage to the side yard and raped by two neighborhood boys. Kennedy told the 911 operator that he saw one of the boys riding away from the house on a bicycle, so a sheriff's deputy that was immediately in the area responded to the complaint and started looking for the culprit, but he did not find the individual.

The deputy noticed that the crime scene in the backyard was somehow inconsistent with rape, and he noticed that the dog was still sleeping undisturbed in the grass. Be that as it may, Kennedy led the deputy to the victim, his stepdaughter's bedroom, where she was lying on the bed wearing a T-shirt and wrapped in a filthy, bloody cargo blanket.

Kennedy informed the deputy that he had carried his stepdaughter like an infant from the yard and placed her in a bathtub to clean her. But the deputy noticed there was no blood on Kennedy's clothes.

When the deputy tried to question the victim, Kennedy constantly interrupted and answered the questions for his stepdaughter. The victim said that she was trying to sell Girl Scout cookies when the two neighborhood boys dragged her from the garage and raped her on the grass nearby.

The victim was taken to Children's Hospital for emergency surgery to repair serious injuries to her body. At the hospital, the victim told hospital personnel and a psychologist that the two neighborhood boys had raped her, but she finally told a family member that Patrick Kennedy, her stepfather, had assaulted her.

The investigation began to focus on Kennedy because his story did not make any sense to the investigators. And then the police learned more about Patrick Kennedy and who he was. Before he called 911, Kennedy called his boss at a local moving company to say he wasn't going to work that morning and he asked a co-worker how to get blood out of a carpet. The co-worker later indicated at trial that Kennedy sounded nervous, and he said his stepdaughter had "just become a young lady."

Kennedy also called B&B Carpet Cleaning at 7:30, 2 hours before the 911 call, and he asked how to clean and remove blood stains from a carpet. Police then found a 1-gallon jug of carpet cleaner and the bloody towels Kennedy used to clean up his crime and hide the evidence.

A forensic lab confirmed that the victim had no grass or soil stains on her clothes so she could not have been assaulted in the grass. The victim later told her mother that Kennedy had raped her. At the trial, she testified

that when she woke up that morning, he was on top of her, covering her eyes with his hands, and that he raped her in her own bed. The victim said she fainted and later threw up.

A jury convicted Patrick Kennedy of aggravated rape of his own 8-year-old stepdaughter and sentenced him to death in Louisiana. Under Louisiana law, a person who commits sexual assault of a child under the age of 12 is subject to the death penalty. Kennedy has appealed to the Supreme Court, and next week in *Kennedy v. Louisiana*, the Supreme Court will hear the case and decide if rape of a child is constitutional under the eighth amendment and whether it violates the cruel and unusual punishment provision of the eighth amendment.

No one has been executed in the United States for a crime other than murder since 1964. Of 3,000 inmates on death row, only two face the death penalty for nonhomicide, and one is Patrick Kennedy.

In addition to Louisiana, Georgia, Montana, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Texas have laws allowing death penalty for rape of a child. In 1977, the Supreme Court decided that the death sentence for rape of an adult woman was unconstitutional, but they never ruled on the issue of sexual assault and rape of a child. Thus, this case appears before the Supreme Court.

Louisiana has interpreted the Supreme Court's previous rulings not to apply in Louisiana because the sexual assault was of a child and that is why this case appears before the Supreme Court to make this decision.

Madam Speaker, this crime is senseless. We can sometimes understand why people commit the crime of theft, we can understand why sometimes people commit the crime of burglary, and even sometimes commit the crime of murder, but there can never be a time in our culture when we understand why a person rapes an 8-year-old girl. It is the ultimate crime of degradation. It is the ultimate type of torture, and it is the ultimate crime against little girls and their identity. It is worse than murder. And in this instance, the victim has a daily reminder of the crime that has ruined her life. It is an attempt to destroy not the life but the soul of this victim. So justice must be pronounced in this case. Society will be judged and the Supreme Court will be judged by the way it treats the innocent among us. Hopefully this case will be upheld by the Supreme Court.

And that's just the way it is.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)